

**FINAL REPORT  
OF THE  
INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON  
MISSING CHILDREN**



**Indiana Legislative Services Agency  
200 W. Washington Street, Suite 301  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204**

**October, 2007**

# INDIANA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## 2007

Senator David Long

Chairman

Fort Wayne

Speaker B. Patrick Bauer

Vice-Chairman

South Bend

Senator Richard Young

Milltown

Representative Brian Bosma

Indianapolis

Senator Brandt Hershman

Monticello

Representative Charlie Brown

Gary

Senator Connie Lawson

Danville

Representative Dale Grubb

Covington

Senator Teresa Lubbers

Indianapolis

Representative Scott Pelath

Michigan City

Senator James Merritt

Indianapolis

Representative Russell Stilwell

Boonville

Senator Vi Simpson

Bloomington

Representative William Friend

Macy

Senator Samuel Smith

East Chicago

Representative Kathy Richardson

Noblesville

John M. Ross  
Executive Director  
Legislative Services Agency

# **INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON MISSING CHILDREN**

## **Membership Roster**

### **Representatives**

Dennis Avery, Chairperson  
Evansville

Carolene Mays  
Indianapolis

David Cheatham  
North Vernon

Thomas Knollman  
Liberty

Suzanne Crouch  
Evansville

Jackie Walorski  
Lakeville

### **Senators**

Vaneta Becker, Vice Chairperson  
Evansville

John Waterman  
Shelburn

Michael Delph  
Carmel

Connie Sipes  
New Albany

Glenn Howard  
Indianapolis

Timothy Skinner  
Terre Haute

### **Staff**

K.C. Norwalk  
Attorney for the Committee

David Lusan  
Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes, and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>.

## **I. STATUTORY AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DIRECTIVES**

The Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation directing the Committee to study issues related to the location and recovery of missing children, including the use of DNA profiles, fingerprints, and technology to assist in the location and recovery of missing children (HEA 1726-2007).

The Legislative Council assigned to the Committee the additional responsibility to study the problem of homeless youth (HR 89).

## **II. INTRODUCTION AND REASONS FOR STUDY**

See Section I above.

## **III. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM**

The Committee met five times during the 2007 interim. Meetings were held as follows:

1. August 2, 2007, at the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Presentations were made concerning:
  - (A) The Indiana Clearinghouse for Information on Missing Children.
  - (B) Issues related to law enforcement's role when a child is missing.
  - (C) The importance of the Committee studying homeless youth issues.
  - (D) The State Department of Education's involvement with homeless youth as required by the Federal McKinney-Vento Act.
  - (E) The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority's grant distributions to agencies dealing with homeless issues.
  - (F) The Department of Child Services involvement with homeless youth and missing children.
2. September 11, 2007, at the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Presentations were made concerning:
  - (A) Foster youth issues.
  - (B) Homelessness and homeless youth issues.
  - (C) The Department of Correction's programs concerning the release of inmates.
  - (D) Foster care policies.
  - (E) Homeless youth programs in rural communities.
  - (F) Safe Place programs.
  - (G) Indiana Youth Service Organizations.
  - (H) Children's Bureau programs for the homeless.
3. October 2, 2007, at the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Presentations were

made concerning:

- (A) Transitional planning for foster youth.
- (B) Unattached youth.
- (C) Potential legislation that the Committee may consider.

4. October 22, 2007, at the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Presentations were made concerning:

- (A) Homelessness studies.
- (B) Homelessness issues.

The Committee also discussed potential legislation.

5. October 31, 2007, at the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. A presentation was made concerning the Department of Education's Kid Escape program. The Committee also considered potential legislation and this final report.

#### **IV. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY**

##### **Missing Children Issues**

The Committee heard testimony from Don Abbott and several law enforcement officials concerning missing children issues.

Don Abbott testified about his experiences concerning missing children issues after his granddaughter became missing. Mr. Abbott testified that state governments and the federal government should establish forensic databases containing fingerprints and DNA samples of children in case a child becomes missing.

Andre Clark, the Director of the Indiana Clearinghouse for Information on Missing Children, explained law enforcement's procedures when a child is reported missing. He also explained to the Committee how Indiana's databases interface with federal databases concerning missing children.

Captain Sherry Beck, Anna Sullivan, and Major Ed Littlejohn, of the Indiana State Police, testified about the statutory duties of the State Police concerning missing children. They also discussed the fingerprint identification process, the role of the State Police laboratories in analyzing DNA, and the federal government's restrictions on different databases concerning missing persons.

Clarissa Snapp and David Woodward, of the State Department of Education, testified about the State Department's Kid Escape program, a child safety initiative to teach young people how to avoid being abducted.

##### **Homeless Issues**

The Committee heard testimony regarding several homeless related issues.

Cynthia Smith, the Executive Director of the Youth Service Bureau in Evansville, testified about the need for the Committee to study homeless youth issues. Ms. Smith discussed that it is difficult to determine the exact number of homeless youth and some cities in Indiana do not have temporary shelter for teenagers. Ms. Smith also suggested that the state could assist homeless youth by identifying federal money for homeless youth issues, devising a best practices model for assisting homeless youth, and devising a program to prevent youth from becoming homeless.

Rodney Stockment, Manager of Community Services at the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, testified about the grants the authority provides to different agencies that combat homelessness.

Stephanie Yoder, Deputy Director of Community Services at the Department of Child Services, testified about the department's involvement with homeless youth and missing children. Ms. Yoder also noted that one of the goals of the foster care program is to prevent children who age out of foster care from becoming homeless.

Paulette Moore, Director of the Wheeler Mission Care Center, discussed several homeless statistics and problems that many homeless shelters that serve children encounter.

Kevin Moore and Jim Cox, of the Indiana Department of Correction, testified about the Department of Correction's efforts at preventing homelessness of former inmates. Mr. Cox further explained that many local community corrections programs assist offenders with homelessness prevention.

Bill Glick, the Executive Director of the Indiana Juvenile Justice Task Force, discussed issues that many homeless youth experience in rural areas. Mr. Glick described his organization's efforts to combat youth homelessness in rural areas and described the success of the Safe Place program. Mr. Glick also discussed issues that homeless and unattached youth often experience in college.

Jim Killen, Bonnie Stryker, Elizabeth Malone, and Ron Thompson, of the Indiana Youth Services Organization, explained the statutory duties of their organization to prevent juveniles from becoming delinquent, discussed their experiences in working with homeless and runaway youth, and suggested legislative ideas for the Committee to consider.

Duane Wade of the Children's Bureau testified about his experience operating an emergency shelter that provides services to individuals that many other shelters will not accept, including newborns and youth up to 17 years of age.

Cheryl Hall-Russell, the Chief Executive Officer of the Indiana Youth Services Organization, testified about unattached youth. Ms. Hall-Russell also suggested that the Committee consider legislation to extend the period of time a shelter has to contact a parent if a child attempts to obtain services from a runaway or homeless shelter.

Shirley Caylor and Gavin Mariano, of the Crisis Center, talked about their experiences providing homeless services to youth in Gary, Indiana. Mr. Mariano also discussed his experiences as a youth who received services from the Crisis Center, and then returned to the Crisis Center as an employee.

Lauren Felming-Balmer, the Executive Director of the Clark County Youth Shelter, testified about the shelter services her agency provides in Southern Indiana, problems with federal funding of shelters, and the success of the Safe Place program in her area.

Brady August, of the Street Outreach Program of St. Joseph County, and Spencer Jackson addressed the Committee about Mr. Jackson's experiences as a homeless youth.

Eric Wright, the Director of the Center for Health Policy, testified about his studies of the homeless in Indiana and Indianapolis, including counting homeless in Indianapolis.

Patty Avery, of the Evansville-Vanderburgh County Homeless Youth Council, discussed her program's work with combating homeless youth.

### **Foster Care Issues**

Michelle Clark, an education advocate at IUPUI, testified about her experiences assisting foster youth to attain their educational goals. Ms. Clark also discussed problems foster youth commonly experience, including a lack of support and possessing little education or job skills after aging out of foster care. Ms. Clark also brought to the Committee's attention problems that foster youth often have in maintaining sibling relationships while in foster care.

Katie Martin and Judy Velasco, students at Valparaiso University, addressed the Committee regarding foster care policies in Indiana and other states. Ms. Martin and Ms. Velasco recommended that Indiana adopt permanency planning for foster youth and require foster youth caseworkers to present options that can assist foster youth when they leave foster care.

Cassandra Porter, Permanency Manager at the Department of Child Services, discussed her agency's transition planning for foster youth and other agency programs that assist foster youth with becoming independent.

### **Education Issues**

Molly Chamberlin and Christina Endres, of the State Department of Education, testified about the State Department's involvement with homeless youth as required by the Federal McKinney-Vento Act. These responsibilities include assisting homeless youth with enrolling in school, receiving transportation to school, and receiving equal treatment while in school.

## **V. COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee made the following recommendations and findings:

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly provide adequate funding for Safe Place programs to expand to each county in Indiana, subject to available resources.

The Committee finds that every child has the right to safe harbor.

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly provide funding to support the expansion of shelters for runaway youth and homeless persons in Indiana, subject to available resources.

The Committee recommended the following legislative drafts:

**PD 3228 (Twenty-first century scholars with GED diplomas)**

Provides that a student who would otherwise qualify for a twenty-first century scholarship is not disqualified as a scholarship recipient if the student has: (1) withdrawn from school due to financial hardship, illness, or a court order; and (2) obtained a general educational development diploma.

**PD 3255 (Sibling Visitation for Foster Youth)**

Requires the department of child services (DCS) to promote sibling visitation for every child who receives foster care. Allows a sibling to request sibling visitation if one of the siblings is receiving foster care. Requires DCS to allow sibling visitation if it is in the best interests of the child receiving foster care. Provides that if DCS denies a request for sibling visitation, an individual may petition a juvenile court for sibling visitation. Requires a court to grant sibling visitation if the court determines sibling visitation is in the best interests of the child who receives foster care. Permits a court to appoint a guardian ad litem or court appointed special advocate if a child requesting sibling visitation is receiving foster care. Provides that a guardian ad litem or court appointed special advocate appointed in a sibling visitation case is immune from civil liability, except for gross misconduct.

**PD 3398 (Homeless and Foster Care Education)**

Requires each school corporation to: (1) appoint a liaison for homeless children (liaison); and (2) report to the department of education (department) the contact information for the liaison. Requires the department to train new liaisons. Requires each school corporation that has an Internet web site to publish on the web site the contact information for the liaison. Relocates a chapter of the Indiana Code concerning the transportation of homeless students to a new article concerning homeless children. Requires a school corporation to transport a student in foster care to and from the school in which the student was enrolled before receiving foster care. Requires each school corporation to provide tutoring for a child who is in foster care or who is homeless, if the school corporation determines the child has a demonstrated need for tutoring.

**PD 3382 (Homelessness)**

Requires the Indiana housing and community development authority (authority) to: (1) oversee and encourage a regional homeless delivery system; (2) facilitate the



dissemination of information to assist individuals and families with accessing local resources, programs, and services related to homelessness, housing, and community development; and (3) determine the number of homeless individuals, including homeless children, in Indiana, and the number of homeless in Indiana who are residents of Indiana. Extends the authority's power to coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and social services program to include individuals or families facing or experiencing homelessness. Provides that an individual who is at least 16 and less than 18 years of age or an unattached youth may receive shelter and services or items directly related to providing shelter for homeless or low income individuals without the approval of a parent, guardian, or custodian. Provides that an emergency shelter or shelter care facility is not required to notify an emancipated minor's parent, guardian, or custodian if the emancipated minor receives or attempts to receive any services from an emergency shelter, a shelter care facility, or a homeless person or low income program. Provides that an emergency shelter or shelter care facility that receives a runaway child shall: (1) notify the child's parent, guardian, or custodian of the child's location not later than 72 hours after receiving the child; and (2) notify the department of child services if the child alleges that the child is the subject of abuse or neglect.

### **Final Report**

The Committee approved this final report in a 9-0 roll call vote.

## WITNESS LIST

Don Abbott  
Cynthia Smith, Executive Director of the Youth Service Bureau in Evansville  
Captain Sherry Beck, Indiana State Police  
Andre Clark, Director of the Indiana Clearinghouse for Information on Missing Children  
Anna Sullivan, Indiana State Police  
Major Ed Littlejohn, Indiana State Police  
Molly Chamberlin, State Department of Education  
Christina Endres, State Department of Education  
Rodney Stockment, Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority  
Stephanie Yoder, Department of Child Services  
Michelle Clark, IUPUI  
Paulette Moore, Wheeler Mission Care Center  
Kevin Moore, Department of Correction  
Jim Cox, Department of Correction  
Katie Martin, Valparaiso University  
Judy Velasco, Valparaiso University  
Bill Glick, Indiana Juvenile Justice Task Force  
Jim Killen, Indiana Youth Services Organization  
Bonnie Stryker, Indiana Youth Services Organization  
Elizabeth Malone, Indiana Youth Services Organization  
Ron Thompson, Indiana Youth Services Organization  
Duane Wade, Children's Bureau  
Cassandra Porter, Department of Child Services  
Cheryl Hall-Russell, Indiana Youth Services Organization  
Shirley Caylor, Crisis Center  
Gavin Mariano, Crisis Center  
Laura Fleming-Balmer, Clark County Youth Shelter  
Bardy August, Street Outreach Program  
Spencer Jackson  
Eric Wright, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment  
Patty Avery, Evansville-Vanderburgh County Homeless Youth Council  
Clarissa Snapp, State Department of Education  
David Woodward, State Department of Education  
Stephanie Reeve, Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority